

Public School Principals' Top Three Most Important Education Goals, by Charter Status and School Level

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The data used in this report come from the Principal Questionnaire of the 2015-16 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), a nationally representative sample survey of public K-12 schools, principals, and teachers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

In the 2015-16 NTPS, public school principals were asked to identify their top three most important education goals from a list of academic and social-emotional priorities. Overall, 72 percent selected “Building basic literacy skills,” 69 percent chose “Encouraging academic excellence,” and 54 percent placed “Promoting good work habits and self-discipline” as one of their top three goals (data not shown; see supplemental table at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020201>). In this report, principals’ priorities are compared between traditional public and public charter schools,

both overall (**FIGURE 1**) and by school level (**FIGURE 2**).¹ The most frequently selected goals are shown in figure 1. Data on all 10 goals are available in the supplemental tables.

For most goals asked about, principals at traditional public schools and public charter schools gave similar ratings; however, there was some variation within academic goals.²

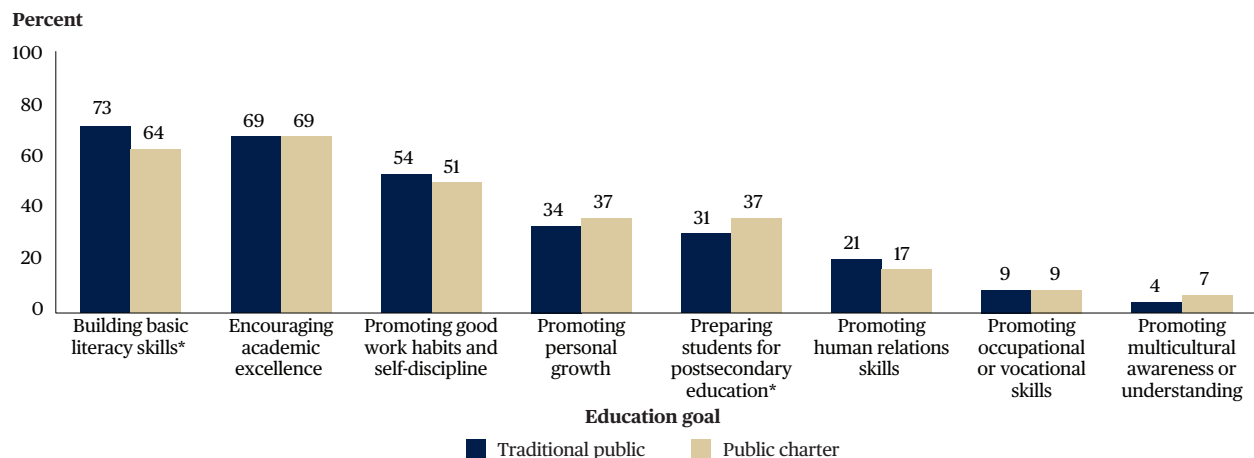
Overall, principals in both traditional public and public charter schools consistently ranked “Building basic literacy skills,” “Encouraging academic excellence,”

and “Promoting good work habits and self-discipline” as one of their most important goals.

A higher percentage of principals in traditional public schools ranked “Building basic literacy skills” as one of their top three most important education goals (73 percent) than the percentage of public charter school principals (64 percent).

On the other hand, public charter school principals prioritized preparing students for postsecondary education at higher rates than their traditional public school counterparts, 37 percent to 31 percent.

FIGURE 1. Percentage of public school principals who rated specific education goals as first, second, or third most important, by school type: School year 2015-16



* Indicates significant difference between traditional public and public charter at the $p < .05$ level.

NOTE: Public school principals were given 10 different goals and asked to rate 3 of them as first, second, and third most important. The goals displayed highlight the differences between school levels. “Promoting specific moral values” and “Fostering religious or spiritual development” are not shown here but can be seen in the associated tables at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020201>. Basic literacy skills include reading, math, writing, and speaking. Examples of personal growth include self-esteem and self-knowledge.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Principal Data File,” 2015-16.

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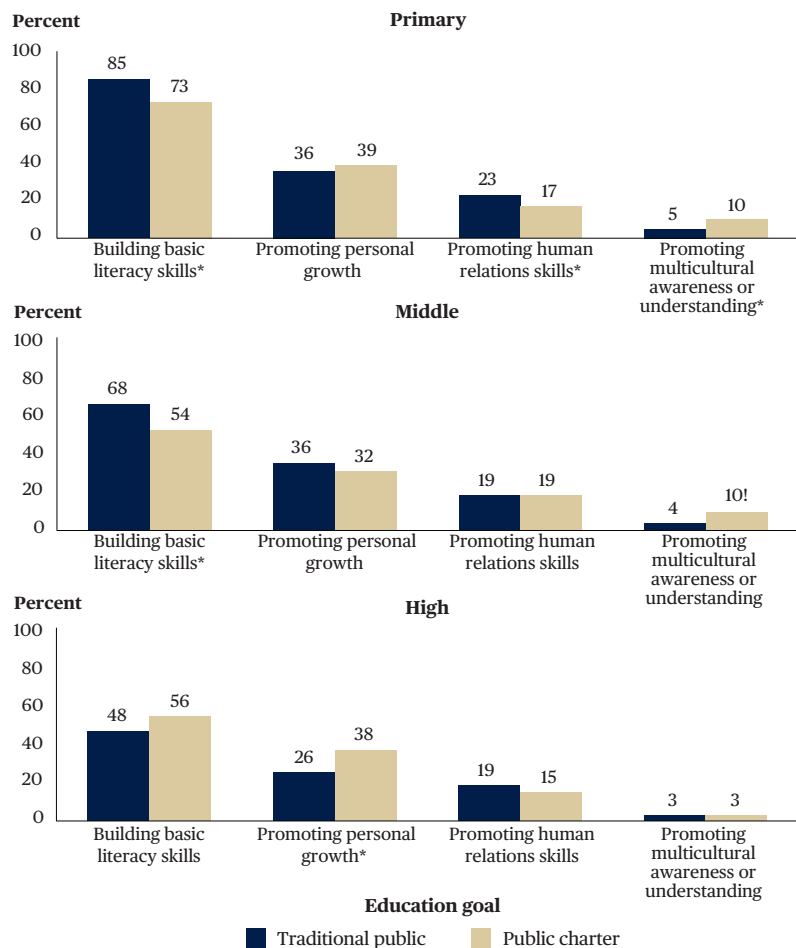
Generally, principals' goals did not vary by charter status and school level, though some measurable differences were found in both academic and social-emotional goals.

Figure 2 displays the goals where reportable differences can be found across school type and level. Traditional public school principals chose "Building basic literacy skills" more frequently in primary and middle schools (85 percent and 68 percent, respectively) than public charter school principals in primary and middle schools (73 percent and 54 percent, respectively). However, there was no significant difference between traditional public high school principals and public charter school principals.

In high schools, traditional public school and public charter school principals exhibited few differences but did differ in the priority they gave to the social-emotional goal of "Promoting personal growth." Twenty-six percent of traditional public school principals ranked this as one of their top three most important goals, lower than 38 percent of public charter high school principals.

Two other social-emotional goal differences were observed for primary schools. A higher percentage of traditional public school principals ranked "Promoting human relations skills" as one of their top three most important goals (23 percent) than the percentage of principals in public charter schools (17 percent); conversely, a higher percentage of public charter school principals chose "Promoting multicultural awareness or understanding" as one of their top three most important goals (10 percent) than the percentage of principals in traditional public schools (5 percent).

FIGURE 2. Percentage of public school principals who rated specific education goals as one of their top three most important goals, by charter status and school level: School year 2015-16



! Interpret data with caution. The standard error for this estimate is 30 to 50 percent of the estimate's value.

* Indicates significant difference between traditional public and public charter at the $p < .05$ level.

NOTE: Public school principals were given 10 different goals and asked to rate 3 of them as first, second, and third most important. The goals displayed highlight the differences between school levels. Six goals are not shown here, and data for combined schools are not shown here, but both can be seen in the associated tables at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020201>. Basic literacy skills include reading, math, writing, and speaking. Examples of personal growth include self-esteem and self-knowledge.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Principal Data File," 2015-16.

Endnotes

¹ Primary schools are those with at least one grade lower than 5 and no grade higher than 8. Middle schools have no grade lower than 5 and no grade higher than 9. High schools have no grade lower than 7 and at least one grade higher than 8.

Combined schools are those with at least one grade lower than 7 and at least one grade higher than 8, or with all students in ungraded classrooms.

² See the supplementary tables for a full list of goals considered academic and goals considered social-emotional.